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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8060
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2680
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1940
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5909
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5678
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2293
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, MAY 14, 2007

In Today's Papers

The Republic Rally

All papers report that 1.5 million people gathered yesterday in the Aegean city of Izmir, decorating the city's Kordon district with flags and chanting slogans against the government. Mainstream Vatan says that hundreds of thousands of people turned the city into a poppy field with the flags and they were "as ardent as they would be if they were there to meet Ataturk." Mainstream Sabah describes the rally as a "feast of democracy." Papers report that there was disappointment in Izmir when leaders of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and Democratic Left Party (DSP) did not jointly announce their alliance, as had been expected. Popular slogans at the rally included "Union on the Left," "Turkey is Secular and Will Stay Secular" and "We do not Want a Sharia State."

Editorial Comment on the Rally: "Listen to the Voice of Masses"

Nationalist-leftist daily Cumhuriyet editorialized on page one: "When the ruling party organized a rally recently, it had a political purpose. However the rally of the masses in Izmir belongs to neither a political party nor the government. The rally was a unique people's movement, an effort to bring a broader vision to Turkey. These rallies are bi-partisan popular acts and receive no financing. It also demonstrates the overall political awareness level - the people are more alert than the politician. The participants are calling for opposition parties, particularly in the left wing, to unite as soon as possible. Politicians should urgently work to find ways to turn this energy of the masses to synergy. The voice of the masses cannot be ignored."

A Counter Memorandum from Intellectuals against the Military Memorandum

Mainstream Milliyet and liberal Radikal report that 500 intellectuals issued a "counter memorandum" in response to the military memorandum of April 27. They stated that they reject the memorandum, they have right to resist against all kinds of initiatives that would interfere in democracy and that politics

could not be conducted under the shadow of military force.

Iraq's Future and Transatlantic Relations Conference

Liberal Radikal reports that the first session of Istanbul meetings arranged by Radikal newspaper and Turkish Foreign Policy Association, sponsored by Garanti Bank, took place in Istanbul yesterday. Turkish and foreign media members, representatives of non-governmental offices discussed the situation in Iraq and agreed that the US always supported Turkey on the path to EU and in its relations with the EU. However, it is generally believed that the US Administration's Iraq policy has had a negative role in Turkey's stability.

Meanwhile, mainstream Sabah reports that the International Iraq Fair will be held in the southeastern Turkish city of Gaziantep May 23-27. Reportedly, more than one thousand companies from thirty different countries will attend the fair. The report comments that the fair will help Gaziantep become the industrial and commercial center of the Middle East.

TV News:

(NTV, 8 A.M.)

Domestic News

- The world's premiere press freedom organization opened its annual meeting in Istanbul yesterday. The speakers at the World Congress of the International Press Institute (IPP) discussed Turkish secularism and censorship in the US.
- DSP Leader Zeki Sezer said cooperation with main opposition CHP is aimed at unseating the ruling AKP.
- Chairperson of the Constitutional Court Tulay Tugcu said,

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referring to the constitutional change package now under consideration by President Sezer, "constitutional reforms passed by parliament do not amount to regime changes."

International News

- World media gives extensive coverage to the Izmir rally for secularism.
- Former CIA president George Tenet says war between Turkey and Greece in 1996 was averted with Washington's efforts.
- A suicide truck bomber crashed into the offices of the KDP in Erbil, killing at least 50 people and wounding 70.
- The United States and Iran will meet in Baghdad in the next few weeks to discuss Tehran taking a productive role in Iraq's security.

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WILSON